The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

"**The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street**" is episode 22 in the first season of the American television anthology series *The Twilight Zone*. The episode was written by Rod Serling, the creator-narrator of the series. It originally aired on March 4, 1960 on CBS. In 2009, *TIME* named it one of the ten best *Twilight Zone* episodes.[1]

"The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street"

The Twilight Zone episode

Lea Waggner and Barry Atwater

Episode no.	Season 1 Episode 22
Directed by	Ronald Winston
Written by	Rod Serling
Production code	173-3620
Original air date	March 4, 1960

Guest appearances

- Claude Akins as Steve Brand
- Barry Atwater as Les Goodman
- Jack Weston as Charlie
- Burt Metcalfe as Don Martin
- Amzie Strickland as unnamed neighbor
- Anne Barton as Mrs. Brand
- Jan Handzlik as Tommy
- Mary Gregory as Sally
- Lea Waggner as Mrs. Goodman
- Ben Erway as Pete Van Horn
- Sheldon Allman and Bill Walsh as the real aliens

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"A World of Difference"

The Twilight Zone (1959 TV series, season 1)

Opening narration

> *Maple Street, U.S.A., late summer. A tree-lined little world of front porch gliders, barbecues, the laughter of children, and the bell of an ice cream vendor. At the sound of the roar and the flash of light, it*

> *will be precisely 6:43 P.M. on Maple Street.*

The narration continues after the neighbors wonder if what flew overhead was a meteor.

> *This is Maple Street on a late Saturday afternoon. Maple Street in the last calm and reflective moment –before the monsters came.*

Plot

One late-summer afternoon, Maple Street is full of children playing and adults

talking, and doing yardwork when a shadow passes over, accompanied by a roar and a flash of light. Everyone notices, but they shrug it off as a passing meteor and quickly resume their activities. The residents soon discover that their power went off, affecting stoves, lawnmowers, cars, phones, even portable radios, and they gather in the street to discuss the situation. Pete Van Horn, hammer slung in his bib overalls, volunteers to walk over to Floral Street, the next street over, to see if it is affected as well. His neighbors, Steve Brand and Charlie Farnsworth, decide to go into town to investigate further, but Tommy, a neighborhood boy, urges them

not to go. Tommy has read a story of an alien invasion causing similar issues, and says that the monsters do not want anyone to leave the street. Tommy adds that in the story, the aliens are living as a family that appears to be human but who are actually scouts, and the power outage that they cause is meant to isolate the neighborhood. The adults are incredulous, assuring him that the cause is natural.

Another resident, Les Goodman, tries unsuccessfully to start his car. As he is walking over to join the other residents, the car starts by itself. This, coupled with the fact that Les didn't rush outside when

things started, makes the neighbors suspect that Les may be an alien. Charlie says Les had always been an oddball, and suggests they go over and investigate, while Steve urges them to be calm and not act like a mob. As they all gather, one woman brings up Les' late nights spent standing in the garden looking up at the sky, as if waiting or looking for something. Les, defending himself as a resident of Maple Street for five years, claims to suffer from insomnia, admonishes his neighbors that they should take caution and not panic. Steve tries to defuse the situation and prevent it from becoming a witch-hunt, but tensions remain high.

As darkness descends, Charlie begins keeping watch over Les Goodman's house. Steve suggests Charlie go home and go to bed. Another neighbor, Don, mentions that Steve has built a ham radio, which Charlie then claims no one has ever seen. Steve sarcastically confirms this, but only manages to make matters worse. Steve and the other neighbors continue to argue, using each person's idiosyncrasies as evidence that they are an alien. Steve warns that such behavior, looking for a scapegoat, is the surest way for the entire neighborhood to "eat each other up alive."

A shadowy figure is seen walking toward them. Tommy exclaims that it is the monster. Claiming it may be necessary for protection, Don obtains a shotgun which Steve quickly confiscates. As the figure gets closer, Charlie panics, grabs the shotgun, and, after the figure is revealed to be carrying a hammer, shoots the figure. When the crowd reaches the fallen figure, they realize it is Pete van Horn, and he is now dead. As Charlie struggles to defend his hasty action, the lights in his house come on. Les and Don call Charlie out on his determination accuse and judge everyone else, and voice suspicions that Pete had discovered evidence that Charlie

is an alien, and he shot Pete to prevent exposure, and even Steve refuses to defend Charlie. Charlie makes a run for his house; everyone chases him, throwing stones, one of which smashes a window, causing the broken glass to fly at Charlie's face, cutting his forehead. Terrified, Charlie attempts to deflect suspicion onto Tommy. While his mother is quick to defend him, several neighbors agree with this idea, as Tommy was the only one who knew about the aliens' plans. Steve continues to try to defuse the situation, but no one listens.

Lights begin flashing on and off in houses throughout the neighborhood; lawnmowers and car engines start and stop for no reason at all. The mob becomes hysterical, hurling accusations, smashing windows, and taking up weapons as the situation devolves into an all-out riot. Meanwhile, at a nearby hilltop, an alien spaceship and its crew are watching the riot on Maple Street while using a device to manipulate the neighborhood's power. They comment on how simply fiddling with consistency leads people to descend into paranoia and panic, and that this is a pattern that can be exploited. They also discuss their intention

to use this strategy to conquer Earth, one neighborhood at a time. They then ascend a stairway into their spaceship.

Closing narration

> *The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices... to be found only in the minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill... and suspicion can destroy... and a*

> *thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all of its own—for the children and the children yet unborn. And the pity of it is that these things cannot be confined to the Twilight Zone.*

Production

The aliens are wearing uniforms left over from the 1956 science fiction film *Forbidden Planet*. Also, the mockup set of the retractable stairway, leading into the lower half of the C-57D cruiser from the same film, is reused for this scene. At the

end of the episode, a stock footage effects-shot of the cruiser in space can be seen (the same shot was also used in "Third from the Sun"). This technique was also used in "To Serve Man". The cruiser is shown upside down when compared to its orientation in *Forbidden Planet*.

2003 remake

A 2003 remake of the episode was produced for the 2002 revival of *The Twilight Zone*, but it was renamed "The Monsters Are on Maple Street". Serling received "Story By" credit. It starred Andrew McCarthy as Will Marshall and Titus Welliver as Dylan. The difference

between the two is that the remake is more about the fear of terrorism. When the power surge happens in the remake, it is caused not by aliens, but instead by the government, specifically the United States Army, experimenting on how small towns react to the fear of terrorism. In the end, the neighborhood takes out its anger and frustration on a family who never left their house after the power surge occurred, thinking that they caused it since they still have power. The residents all fail the test miserably as did all the other inhabitants of every other street they tested.

The opening and closing narration, provided by Forest Whitaker, has also been altered:

> *Maple Street, U.S.A. Suburban community on a pleasant Saturday afternoon... but in a few moments everything will change for the residents of Maple Street as they discover that the monsters they fear may already be among them.*

With the closing narration being:

> *It isn't enough for a sole voice of reason to exist. In this time of uncertainty we are so sure that villains lurk around every corner that we will create them ourselves if we can't find them—for while fear may keep us vigilant, it's also fear that tears us apart—a fear that sadly exists only too often—outside the Twilight Zone.*

Other media

A radio dramatization of this episode was produced in the mid-2000s as part of *The*

Twilight Zone radio series, starring Frank John Hughes as Steve Brand. It was included in *The Twilight Zone: Radio Dramas – Collection 12* collection.

A graphic novel version was published by the Savannah College of Art and Design partnered with Walker & Co. A short-story version was published in *Stories from The Twilight Zone* and ends with a race of two-headed aliens moving into Maple Street.

The episode served as a major influence on science fiction in the decades that followed. Among the films that drew their inspiration from this episode include *The*

Trigger Effect, directed by David Koepp,[2] and *The Mist*, directed by Frank Darabont.[3]

See also

- Cold War
- Crowd psychology
- McCarthyism
- Second Red Scare (1947–57)

References

1. *Cruz, Gilbert (October 2, 2009). "Top 10 Twilight Zone episodes" (http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1927690_1927684_1927666,00.html) . TIME. Retrieved September 24, 2018.*

2. *Maslin, Janet (August 30, 1996). "Movie Review – The Trigger Effect (1996) – Urban Jitters Going Critical" (https://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/30/movies/urban-jitters-going-critical.html) . The New York Times.*
3. *Edward Douglas (November 16, 2007). "An Exclusive Interview with Mr. Frank Darabont!" (http://www.comingsoon.net/horror/news/708268-an-exclusive-interview-with-mr-frank-darabont) . ComingSoon.net. Retrieved September 24, 2018.*

Further reading

- DeVoe, Bill (2008). *Trivia from The Twilight Zone*. Albany, Georgia: Bear Manor Media. ISBN 978-1-59393-136-0.

- Grams, Martin (2008). *The Twilight Zone: Unlocking the Door to a Television Classic*. Churchville, Maryland: OTR Publishing. p. 800. ISBN 978-0-9703310-9-0.
- Zicree, Marc Scott (2018). *The Twilight Zone Companion* (3rd ed.). West Hollywood, California: Silman-James Press. ISBN 978-1-935247-17-3.

External links

- "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street (1960)" (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0734664/) at IMDb

- "The Monsters Are on Maple Street (2003)" (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0734808/) at IMDb

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